

# JB-CSSD CHRONICLE

A publication of the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (JB-CSSD)



November 2025

**Video Message from JB-CSSD's Executive Director Gary Roberge.**



## Getting it Done Honorees

The newest Getting it Done Honorees (November 2025) are Brendan Haley, Food Services Coordinator and Russell Jenkins, Juvenile Probation Officer. Please take a moment to read about these individuals who are going above and beyond and are getting it done for the Branch, our clients, their families, and the communities we serve.



Pictured: Paul Gordon, Center Superintendent, Brendan Haley, Food Services Coordinator, and Jeff Davis, JRS Deputy Director of Operations.

**Brendan Haley** - Brendan has demonstrated exceptional creativity in his role as a Food Service Supervisor. Brendan ensures the smooth daily operation of the food service program, that includes celebrating special holiday meals with a detailed menu that identifies the holiday. Brendan also has designed and implemented a cooking program for the youth in REGIONS. He teaches valuable culinary skills, nutrition awareness, kitchen safety, and allows the youth to make decisions on what they want to create for the day. The youth have made pizza, pretzel, cinnamon rolls, cookies, and many other items. The best part is that they enjoy their creations. Brendan's passion for mentoring and his commitment to excellence have made the program both educational and inspiring!



**Russell Jenkins** - Russell has a firm understanding and comprehension of his “why.” He serves clients and families through a trauma-informed lens and uses a strengths-based approach to case management. Additionally, Russell leverages flex funds to connect youth to positive pro-social activities and incentivizes gains made during supervision. Furthermore, Russell embraces the use of FCBT conversations with clients as part of quality supervision contacts as evidenced by thorough case note documentation and high FCBT utilization rate (45%). Fourth, Russell supports his clients in completing summer employment activities including collaborating with DEEP and the Stamford WIB. Finally, Russell is an active member of the Policy Review Committee where he appropriately engages in discussion and brings field voice and perspective into conversations.

## **Juvenile Probation Services Achieves Fifteen Years of Continuous ACA Accreditation**

The American Correctional Association (ACA), the oldest professional organization dedicated to correction practitioners, has once again recognized Juvenile Probation Services for its outstanding commitment to adhering to best practices when working with justice-involved youth. The ACA’s mission is to improve the justice system by setting national standards and accrediting agencies that meet those rigorous benchmarks. These standards encompass key areas such as supervision, staff training, offender behavior, and overall operational compliance.

On June 4–5, 2025, the ACA conducted an on-site audit of Juvenile Probation Services as part of its reaccreditation process. The audit team emphasized their supportive and non-intrusive approach, engaging with both staff and youth involved in probation services. During interviews, the youth praised Juvenile Probation Officers for consistently going "above and beyond" to connect them with needed resources and services.

Juvenile Probation Services was first accredited in 2010, with reaccreditation taking place every three years. Over the past three years, Juvenile Probation Services maintained full compliance with all 228 national standards—a significant accomplishment. The audit highlighted the department’s strong culture of teamwork and professionalism, with auditors remarking that the officers “know what they are doing and work together and get the job done.”

As a result of dedication and performance, Juvenile Probation was officially reaccredited by the ACA on August 23, 2025, marking its sixth successful accreditation. This achievement reflects not only the hard work of the staff but also their firm commitment to delivering high-quality services.



Pictured: ACA Auditors Dave Johnson (Chairperson) and Sandra Hylton (Member) and during the Exit interview.

#### Juvenile Probation: ACA Accreditation History

- 2010: Juvenile Probation Services received its initial accreditation from the ACA. Accreditation is valid for three years.
- Subsequent Reaccreditations: Juvenile Probation Services was reaccredited in 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022.
- Golden Eagle Award (2015): The Golden Eagle Award is the American Correctional Association’s top honor and is presented at the summer Congress of Correction each year in recognition of superior commitment to the accreditation process. The award was given to the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division when Juvenile Probation, Adult Probation, and Juvenile Residential Services successfully achieved accreditation.

#### **JB-CSSD’s Juvenile Probation Services Collaboration Creating Pathways to Success for Youth**



In the summer of 2021, JB-CSSD's Juvenile Probation Services and Programs and Services units teamed up for a joint venture with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to create an experiential summer learning and work experience for youth under Juvenile Probation supervision. Summer youth employment programs are associated with a significant decrease in recidivism, with studies showing lower rates of arrests and better outcomes for youth.

The DEEP Summer Work program was created to provide youth with formal work experience while being mentored and supervised by staff at JB-CSSD's Linking Youth to Natural Communities (LYNC). During the summer, LYNC staff collaborate with the youth and act as role models to teach essential employment skills. Each week includes one educational day focused on species identification and removal, as well as tree and flower identification and interpretive learning. Youth also participate in the LYNC EMPLOY Group, which offers job readiness skills, including communication and resume development.

On Thursdays and Fridays, the LYNC programs take youth to DEEP sites and parks across Connecticut. They work at these locations from 10:00am to 3:00pm, performing tasks such as brush removal, hedging, and other park maintenance activities. Youth earn the state's minimum wage for their participation in this JB-CSSD-funded initiative.

To date, over 60 youth have graduated from the program. This past summer, JB-CSSD and DEEP celebrated the successful completion and graduation of 32 youth from the nine participating LYNC programs in the state. If interested, youth in the DEEP Summer Program can apply for DEEP seasonal work.

*Pictured above: DEEP Graduates, JB-CSSD Staff, LYNC providers, and friends of Hammonasset Beach State Park at the DEEP Graduation and Meigs Point Nature Center Environmental Education Experience.*

## Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

In recognition of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, Juvenile Residential Services launched a month-long initiative celebrating the suicide-safer care provided across our residential programs. Administration, frontline staff, and youth came together to create messages of hope through posters and signs, engage in restorative circles focused on suicide prevention, and share uplifting notes with peers and staff alike. Within our state-run centers, staff facilitated Restorative Justice Circles focused on suicide prevention topics, youth and staff decorated their spaces with encouraging messages and youth expressed appreciation to staff, in addition to engaging in a “Chalk the Walk” event where our youth wrote encouraging messages to their peers in outdoor spaces.

While this month served as a special time to honor lives lost to suicide, our commitment to fostering hope and safety continues every day of the year. Thank you to everyone who participated and continues to provide compassionate, supportive care to our youth!



Artwork completed by youth in Juvenile Residential Services center.



Hartford pretrial Juvenile Residential Services staff (bottom left to right) Program and Services Supervisor, Sara McCloud, Program Manager Judith D'Alessandro. (Top row left to right) Classification and Program Officer Andrew Samsel, Deputy Superintendent Tasha Yearwood, Yale Behavioral Health clinician Angela Panzo, Yale Behavioral Health clinician Christine Conner, Classification and Program Officer Shannon Samuels, Classification and Program Officer Jon Faass, Program and Services Supervisor Roger Maybin, and Classification and Program Officer Parris Woods.



Bridgeport Juvenile Residential Services staff (left to right) Deputy Superintendent Dino Guerra, Program and Services Supervisor Sammy Fronseca, Classification and Program Officer Jun Miyamoto, and Program and Services Supervisor Melissa Promuto.



Description: Hartford REGIONS Juvenile Residential Services staff (left to right) Yale Behavioral Health clinician Sara Young, Yale Behavioral Health clinician Katrina Ranmal, Deputy

Superintendent Mikhail Deirish, Classification and program Officer Anthony Guess, Classification and Program Officer Ugbo Eghosa, and Deputy Superintendent Michael Oddo.

## Real-World Experience Makes a Real World of Difference



JRS kids and their mentors volunteer weekly at CT Foodshare in Wallingford.

The teens of Juvenile Residential Services are often too young yet for employment or preparing for their very first job. Both operations and contracted staff work to support career exploration and job readiness. Whether completing career interest inventories, drafting a first resume, or participating in business etiquette workshops, youth are supported and provided resources for entry-level employment.

One of the most effective tools for youth career development is exploration through experiential learning. Experiential learning involves "learning by doing" in real-world settings to gain practical skills, test different career paths, and build a professional network. This hands-on approach clarifies career goals, boosts confidence, and increases employability through activities like internships, volunteering, and community service projects.

For teens with community access, experiential opportunities can be transformational. Beyond building their resumes and acquiring new references, youth establish the foundational skills most requested by employers: a strong work ethic, effective communication, and problem-solving skills.

Experiential education for teens allows them to connect classroom concepts with real-world applications, and try-on roles and industries. JRS offers a variety of opportunities for experiential learning. Currently, JRS kids are interning at a youth camp, an automotive repair shop, a fitness center, and a community clothing closet. Others are volunteering at food banks and libraries. All of these experiences help kids become more confident and career-ready upon discharge.

## JRS & CT State Library Partnership

Recently, JRS partnered with the CT State Library. This partnership included updating the libraries in both Hartford and Bridgeport residential centers. The CT State Library donated over 100 books to both centers for youth to enjoy.

Hartford Juvenile Residential Center had a ribbon cutting to celebrate their newly renovated library. Administrators, students, and education staff were in attendance to recognize the renovation and collaboration with the CT State Library.



## Library Card Sign Up Month Challenge



CJR youth with new library cards

In an effort to celebrate Library Card Sign Up Month, JRS created a challenge to highlight youth getting library cards. This initiative encouraged young readers to explore their local library, new books, and resources while building literacy skills.

All JRS sites and probation youth participated in this challenge. Over 20 youth will be highlighted for winning the challenge.

## **Keeping it Fresh**

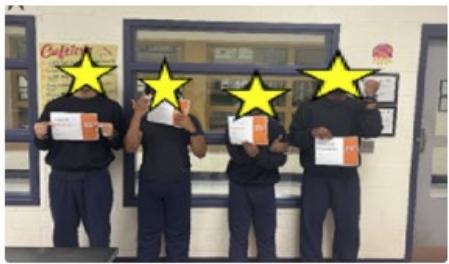
Hartford Juvenile Center has a focus on providing engaging activities for our youth. In recent months, staff have introduced new programs to further motivate and inspire participation throughout the facility, thus promoting a positive attitude to the daily programming being offered. Participation in these events is contingent upon meeting criteria established by the organizing teams, and JRS is proud to report that every youth met the requirements and was able to join in the activities below!

This past summer, Hartford enjoyed a victorious basketball tournament season, prompting staff to reward the youth with championship rings. Our undefeated team was celebrated across the facility and treated to special foods of their choice. Classification and Program Officer Terisa Godbee has been leading regular groups with our female youth, culminating in a successful spa day aimed at promoting self-wellness. Our school provider, DOMUS, partnered with us to organize a "Fun Day," during which each unit participated in outdoor and indoor activities to earn points.

Teams with the highest scores received a pizza party, while all participants enjoyed McDonald's gift cards and ice cream. Additionally, a vendor specializing in mindfulness and plant terrarium creation led a hands-on project with all the youth. Participants decorated their housing units with their creations—a new and enjoyable experience that may have inspired some future horticulturists.

Also, Nancy Decrecenzo and Simone Harris helped give Hartford's library a "facelift." Through a new partnership with the Connecticut State Library, they were able to provide more up-to-date and interesting literature for our young people. Hartford held a ribbon cutting for the grand opening, in which the executive team of Juvenile Residential Services attended. The residents present for the experience were thrilled!

Hartford also had another successful family night during visitation! Family night is held twice a month and gives a more fun and food filled engagement experience for families!



Regions Youth Championship Basketball Team 2025



HJRC staff at the Library Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with Connecticut Library Association



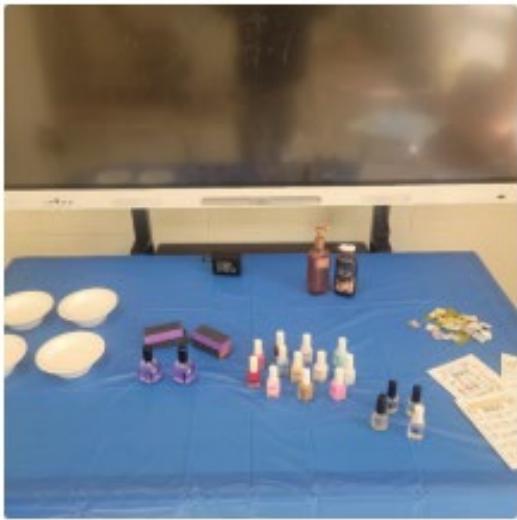
Regions Basketball Champion Rings



DOMUS/HJRC Field Day 2025; Youth Competing in bucket challenge.



Youth making Terrariums during Plant Workshop with Positive Vibes Plant Lounge



Spa Day and Self Care Workshop with CPO Godbee



Spa day and self-care.



Spa day and self-care.



Spa day and self-care.



Family Night (Visitation)

## Fall into Kindness with the Central Office Kindness Crew!

The Central Office Kindness Crew has been on a roll this fall—spreading good vibes, strengthening our workplace community, and making a difference inside and outside the office!

- Tree September: Cleaning Up for a Cause

To kick off the season, Kelly Orts rallied a group of Central Office volunteers for a community clean-up at Riverfront Park in Glastonbury. Armed with trash grabbers, garbage bags, and gloves, the team rolled up their sleeves and got to work. By the end of the day, the park was clean—and everyone left with a small eco-friendly token of appreciation.

### ✉️ October: Letters of Love

In October, the Kindness Crew gathered during lunch to support Love for Our Elders, a nonprofit that combats loneliness among older adults through handwritten letters. Thanks to Kelly and Michelle Noehren, staff had the chance to channel their creativity with colorful stationery, markers, stickers, and personalized elder profiles. The result? Dozens of heartfelt letters sure to brighten someone's day!

### 🎃 November: Gratitude Grows Here

Next up, the 4th floor breakroom will be home to a “Gratitude Pumpkin Patch” all November long! If you find yourself in Central Office, stop by to write down something (or someone!) you’re grateful for and help our patch grow with positivity and appreciation.

From community clean-ups to acts of connection and gratitude, the Kindness Crew is showing that even small gestures can make a big impact. Stay tuned for more ways to spread kindness this winter!



All the necessary supplies for the community clean-up.



Staff volunteering on break to make cards for the elderly.



Gratitude board in the lunchroom.